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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 109: Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (A/52/509)

1. **Ms. Quisumbing** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) recalled that the High Commissioner was entrusted with the task of coordinating the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and implementing its Programme of Activities. The goal of the Decade was to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health. In the spirit of the theme of the Decade, "Indigenous people: partnership in Action", efforts had been made to address the special concerns of indigenous people and to help enhance their participation in all aspects of society.

2. In 1997, a technical meeting on the protection of the heritage of indigenous people had been held in Geneva and a second workshop on the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system had been held in Santiago, Chile. Representatives of Governments, indigenous organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations bodies had been invited to participate in the workshop, which had agreed that the agenda of the proposed forum should include questions relating to the environment, development, health, education and human rights.

3. The Office of the High Commissioner had launched a fellowship programme for indigenous people in July 1997. Four indigenous persons from Brazil, India, Japan and the Russian Federation had been awarded six-month fellowships and were currently receiving human rights training and gaining practical experience at the Office of the High Commissioner in Geneva. The Voluntary Fund for the International Decade was financing the fellowship programme. It was also providing small grants to indigenous organizations for their own human rights training or capacity-building.

4. Several new members had been appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund. Established in 1985, the Fund provided financial assistance to representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to enable them to attend sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. In 1997, the Fund had provided financial assistance to a total of 27 indigenous representatives for that purpose.

5. **Mr. Rytövuori** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the need for a permanent forum for indigenous people had been clearly demonstrated. Increased efforts and a positive political will were needed to take the necessary practical measures to preserve, protect and promote indigenous cultures.

6. Indigenous people were finding ways to intensify their cooperation, both nationally and internationally. The Sami parliaments of Finland, Norway and Sweden, for instance, had institutionalized their cooperation within a new Sami parliamentary council, and in 1997 a seminar bringing together Sami, Ogoni and Masai indigenous groups had been held in Finnish Lapland. However, a more permanent forum was needed, which should have a broad mandate, encompassing issues related to development, the environment, health, education and human rights, and report directly to the Economic and Social Council. Forum members should be chosen from among representatives of both Governments and indigenous peoples, but membership should be limited in order to ensure efficiency. The time had come for practical action to set up the forum, and the Commission on Human Rights, with input from indigenous peoples themselves, should consider how progress could be made towards that end. In terms of the United Nations reform process, the forum would allow indigenous issues to be addressed in a more comprehensive and efficient manner.

7. The Arctic regions and the tropical rainforests faced large-scale exploration and exploitation of their rich natural resources and at the same time were home to many indigenous cultures. Reliable and efficient means must be found to assess the social impact of development on such cultures, with special attention to the situation and rights of indigenous women. The preservation and well-being of indigenous cultures and communities should be a central goal of any standard-setting work on indigenous peoples. In that context, the Nordic countries urged early completion and adoption of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

8. In those countries where indigenous peoples were also minorities, they were entitled to invoke general rights of persons belonging to minorities as well as specific rights of indigenous peoples. However, since existing international human rights instruments did not fully cover the situation of indigenous peoples, it was important to adopt standards pertaining specifically to them. Recent progress in standard-setting at the regional level, for instance, within the Council of Europe, should inspire the United Nations system to

achieve enhanced international protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples.

9. **Ms. Monroy** (Mexico) said the her Government recognized and valued the contribution of indigenous peoples to Mexican society. Mexico's multicultural composition was recognized in the Constitution, which stated that the law must protect and promote the development of indigenous languages, cultures, customs and specific forms of social organization. The national development plan for the period 1995-2000 identified, as a priority, the need to address indigenous peoples' historical claims in the areas of justice, land ownership and other political and social rights. Continuous efforts were being made to combat poverty, which was one of the main obstacles to the full development of Mexico's indigenous peoples.

10. School attendance by indigenous children was increasing and they were currently served by some 16,000 educational establishments. As part of the Government's efforts to preserve indigenous traditions and customs, textbooks and teaching aids had been published in 53 indigenous languages. Programmes had been launched to expand medical coverage for the indigenous population and to promote traditional indigenous medicine. Other measures included agricultural projects, projects to improve the situation of rural women and a programme for granting land title to indigenous people living in urban areas. A programme of work for 1997 also sought to promote social development and production programmes carried out by indigenous peoples. As a result of a national consultation on human rights and indigenous participation, held in 1996, the Government had created a national programme for the development of indigenous peoples to address their needs in the areas of nutrition, health, education, housing, services and communications. Her Government intended to intensify its efforts to mainstream the interests and aspirations of Mexico's indigenous peoples, drawing on their own initiatives and proposals.

11. Mexico had also supported the strengthening of international cooperation for the promotion and protection of indigenous rights and had contributed to the establishment and capitalization of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. At the multilateral level, her Government was fully committed to the implementation of the Programme of Activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and supported the drafting of a United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples, in the United Nations system, which should benefit from the wealth of experience that those peoples could contribute.

12. **Mr. Martini** (Guatemala) observed that the late distribution of documents concerning the item before the Committee and other items of interest to Member States undermined the effectiveness of the Committee's work.

13. In Guatemala, indigenous organizations were becoming increasingly active. The Guatemalan Indigenous Development Fund (FODIGUA), founded in 1994, was a nationwide, decentralized institution for the development of the Maya people which provided direct funding for the implementation of local projects in the areas of health, education, culture and values, infrastructure and electric power. Such projects were based on the Maya world view, which meant that they sought harmony with God and nature and were adopted by consensus.

14. The Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which had entered into force in December 1996 when the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace had been signed, called for four constitutional reforms and the creation of five commissions. Broadly speaking, the reforms involved constitutional recognition of Guatemala's linguistic and cultural diversity and respect for individual and collective rights based on the principles of the Maya world view. That historic step had launched a highly innovative process, encompassing, *inter alia*, an educational reform that emphasized bilingual education for indigenous groups, the granting of official status to indigenous languages and the identification and preservation of Maya holy places. In cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Government had developed special education programmes for the population groups, most of them indigenous, which had been displaced by the internal armed conflict. Continuing support was also being provided for education systems developed for and by uprooted indigenous groups during the conflict. A law was being drafted to promote full recognition of the economic, social, cultural and political rights of the Maya, Garifuna and Xinca peoples.

15. His Government urged the working group of the Commission on Human Rights to complete its work on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. One goal of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People which had yet to be achieved was the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system. His delegation fully supported the proposals emanating from the second workshop on the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people, held in Santiago in June 1997. Such a forum would provide a

platform for the direct participation of population groups which had traditionally suffered discrimination.

16. Guatemala urged Member States to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade and the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to help achieve the goals of the Decade and provide assistance to the most needy indigenous peoples.

17. **Ms. Muir** (Papua New Guinea) said that, given the continuing marginalization of indigenous peoples, her delegation welcomed efforts to include indigenous people in the work of the United Nations and noted with satisfaction the efforts of many Member States and United Nations organs to recognize their rights. It also welcomed recent initiatives under the Convention on Biological Diversity to protect and share the benefits of indigenous people's knowledge of medicinal herbs and plants.

18. Her country's population comprised thousands of indigenous ethnic groups, which collectively owned 97 per cent of the country's land resources. The Constitution provided for their direct participation in political decision-making. For instance, as landowners, they participated directly in negotiations to determine the terms and conditions for natural resource development. In some cases, however, indigenous rights and interests must be balanced against the need to distribute the benefits of resource development nationally, within acceptable constitutional and legal parameters. That process had been largely successful in Papua New Guinea, whose laws affirmed the autonomy and rights of clans as custodians of such collectively owned resources as land and thus constituted a model for genuinely people-centred development.

19. To help improve the socio-economic conditions of indigenous people, her delegation strongly recommended that activities under the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People should be closely coordinated with other United Nations activities and programmes, such as those relating to the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, the eradication of colonialism by the year 2000 and the upholding of the right of peoples to self-determination. It also urged Governments to contribute further resources to the Voluntary Fund for the Decade.

20. **Mr. Zozulya** (Ukraine) said that protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples and national minorities contributed to the stability of multi-ethnic societies, especially in countries with economies in transition. The goals of adopting a strong declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and establishing a permanent forum for them in the United Nations system should be achieved as soon as possible. The current lack of consensus on the draft declaration appeared to be attributable to the absence of a generally accepted definition of indigenous people. In his delegation's view, the pivotal element of the draft declaration must be the question of self-determination.

21. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action acknowledged the right of peoples to self-determination, but also stated clearly that the right to take any legitimate action to realize that right "should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States". That implied the existence of a consensus on a code of conduct for peoples and Governments with regard to the exercise of that right in multi-ethnic countries, which in turn presupposed the existence of a right to internal self-determination which had been largely confirmed by recent practice. A common understanding of that right should therefore be developed which was consistent with evolving international law. In the meantime, like a number of other States which were involved in drafting their own national policies on minorities and indigenous peoples, Ukraine had sought solutions within the context of its national constitution and historical framework.

22. In the context of the elaboration of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, he reiterated the need to distinguish between indigenous peoples living in isolated enclaves and those integrated with the rest of society. Different approaches needed to be adopted in defining the political rights of the two groups, as well as their rights to land and resources. To achieve a truly universal declaration, the imbalance in the current draft caused by its heavy emphasis on tribal peoples should be removed and the document made consistent with internationally recognized human rights standards and national laws. Lastly, his delegation supported the creation of a permanent forum for indigenous people at a functional level in the United Nations.

23. **Ms. Hall** (United States of America) said that her Government was deeply committed to promoting and protecting indigenous rights throughout the world, as well as within the United States, and was pleased that indigenous issues had gained increased attention at the United Nations and in other international forums.

24. Her delegation recognized the significance attached by indigenous people to the term "peoples" in the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples that was currently under preparation. It could accept the use of that term, provided that the declaration contained appropriate language clarifying that its use therein was not to be

construed as including rights of self-determination or any other rights which might attach to that term under international law. It welcomed the broad participation of indigenous groups in the elaboration of the draft declaration and called upon them to be prepared to discuss language for a final text when they participated in the working group in 1998.

25. In the United States, changes had been instituted within the Government to make it more responsive to the concerns and needs of indigenous Americans. Several major Government departments had forged close working relationships with native American tribal governments. Consultations with indigenous organizations were proceeding on a variety of topics, including the draft declarations on indigenous peoples being prepared by the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and on environmental issues, and the Government was working to improve its communications with the tribes on matters of key interest to them.

26. **Mr. Ball** (New Zealand) said that his delegation welcomed the activities that had taken place in connection with the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and was pleased to note the progress achieved in mainstreaming indigenous issues within major United Nations programmes and activities. It called on those agencies and departments that had not yet done so to translate their commitment to the world's indigenous people into clear action and to make their own contribution to the Decade.

27. His Government had supported international efforts to further the goals of the Decade by making financial contributions to both the Voluntary Fund for the Decade and the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations. Concerns had been expressed about the standard of management and administration of those Funds, however, and his Government hoped that the Secretariat would act on the recommendations made by the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for the Decade.

28. His delegation also hoped that the conclusion of the third session of the working group on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples increased participants' resolve to achieve a robust, constructive and universally applicable declaration.

29. In New Zealand, a committee of the principal Maori organizations had been established to coordinate national efforts to further the goals of the Decade, and particular priority had since been given to Maori language development and Maori education. Other measures included plans for the holding of conferences on indigenous health and indigenous youth, efforts to make the educational system more responsive to Maori needs and the improvement of health services for Maori. The Government was also committed to addressing socio-economic disparities between Maori and non-Maori and to reaching fair and durable settlements of grievances that had arisen historically between the two communities. Recent changes in the electoral system had also significantly increased Maori political representation, which in Parliament was now fully proportionate to their numbers in the population.

30. **Mr. Neiva-Tavares** (Brazil) reaffirmed his Government's commitment to promoting the rights of indigenous people and its determination to preserve their socio-cultural identity and promote their rights to ethno-development. Brazil's Constitution granted indigenous groups "original rights" to land which they traditionally occupied and the Government was firmly committed to protecting them from violence and to demarcating their lands. The 1996 national action plan for human rights provided for specific action on behalf of indigenous people, particularly in the fields of health care and education.

31. Since full implementation of the Programme of Activities for the International Decade would depend largely on the resources allocated for that purpose, he encouraged the Coordinator for the Decade to ensure the involvement of United Nations bodies in the Programme. Periodic evaluations of those activities were needed in order to identify and overcome obstacles to the sustainable development of indigenous peoples, and his delegation hoped that the Commission on Human Rights would play a significant role in the follow-up to United Nations activities throughout the Decade.

32. His Government had strong doubts about establishing a separate forum for indigenous people, which would function in parallel with the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Attention should instead be given to improving existing United Nations mechanisms, procedures and programmes in that field. The proposed declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples must be universally acceptable and politically realistic. A declaration which allowed some situations to be exempted from its scope would not meet the standards of universality characteristic of United Nations human rights instruments. The distinct historical and legal background that had determined relations between indigenous communities and national societies could not be used as an excuse for not applying in practice the universality of human rights. Lastly, he stressed that the International Decade must be more than a symbolic gesture and must contribute to a new era of sustainable development and full respect for indigenous rights.

33. **Mr. Tapia** (Chile) said that his Government attached particular importance to the Programme of Activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. While some practical results had been achieved in that field, they were insufficient and much remained to be done. There was a need for a body that could deal comprehensively with all the very complex issues that were important to indigenous people and in which the views such people would be given due consideration. In that spirit, Chile had hosted the second workshop on the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system. He hoped that the workshop's report would be considered by the Commission on Human Rights at its next session and would be instrumental in the establishment of such a forum.

34. His delegation strongly supported the efforts of the working group on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and stressed the need to redouble those efforts in order to finalize and adopt the declaration before the end of the Decade.

35. Since Chile's return to democracy in 1990, successive Governments had taken steps to promote the development of the country's indigenous peoples and respect their rights. Pursuant to legislation adopted in 1993, 50,000 hectares of land had been handed over to various indigenous communities; an indigenous development fund had implemented over 2,200 development, educational and cultural projects covering over 25,000 indigenous persons; the number of scholarships awarded annually to indigenous students by the Ministry of Education would reach 10,000 by 1998; legal aid programmes for indigenous persons had been set up; and shelters for Mapuche children who were at risk had been established. The National Indigenous Development Corporation had also helped establish numerous indigenous associations and had supported various indigenous activities and events. All those initiatives reflected the Government's determination to create a truly democratic, prosperous and multicultural society that respected the differences of each of the ethnic groups living in Chile.

36. **Ms. Pinto** (Argentina) said that her country was firmly committed to protecting the human rights of indigenous people. It was a member of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean and had done its utmost to contribute to work on the draft Inter-American declaration on the rights of indigenous people.

37. There were 16 indigenous ethnic groups in Argentina, accounting for 1.5 per cent of the population. The 1994 constitutional reform had recognized the ethnic and cultural diversity of Argentina's indigenous peoples and had incorporated as provisions regulating a number of indigenous issues, such as the legal status of indigenous communities, communal land-ownership, participation in the management of natural resources and preservation of indigenous languages, culture and heritage. In October 1996, the Government had launched a National Plan for Indigenous Communities by announcing the transfer of 250,000 hectares of land to Mapuche communities. The Plan involved restoring ownership of their land to indigenous communities, legally recognizing indigenous forms of organization and government, and setting up an educational programme designed to strengthen the identity of indigenous communities by overcoming cultural barriers and facilitating access to social and economic programmes. The Plan was being financed from the national budget and by the Inter-American Development Bank. In 1997, 125,000 hectares of land had been handed over to members of the Kolla community, while similar initiatives had been launched at the provincial level.

38. In the field of education, steps have been taken to design special programmes for preserving indigenous cultures and teaching indigenous languages. The National Institute for Indigenous Affairs had awarded over 800 scholarships to promote the training of indigenous teachers to provide bilingual and intercultural instruction. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in examining Argentina's periodic report in August 1997, had acknowledged many positive developments with regard to indigenous peoples, while expressing concern at a number of issues, which her Government had duly noted.

39. **Mr. Kryskov** (Russian Federation) said that his Government was committed to protecting the rights and interests of the country's many indigenous peoples. It therefore attached great importance to the adoption of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples currently under discussion in the working group established by the Commission on Human Rights. The draft declaration should encompass such questions as the preservation of the cultural specificities of indigenous peoples, equal participation by them in the political and legislative processes, environmental protection and non-discrimination. It was vital that indigenous peoples themselves should be involved in the drafting process.

40. The meetings, seminars and other events which had taken place over the past year within the framework of the Programme of Activities of the International Decade reflected increased international cooperation with a view to enhancing the situation of indigenous peoples. His delegation noted with particular satisfaction the efforts of

United Nations programmes and specialized agencies to that end.

41. Russian Federation activities to mark the Decade were outlined in a multisectoral plan, which focused on such areas as environmental protection, education, health care and preservation of the traditional ways of life of the indigenous peoples of the north. Those activities were to be coordinated by a national committee and it was hoped that they would culminate in the Russian Federation's accession to International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.

42. He hoped that, in the light of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Activities for the Decade (A/52/509), which clearly demonstrated the need for a mechanism within the United Nations system to facilitate regular exchanges of information on the problems of indigenous peoples and participation by them in the Organization's activities, the question of the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system would be resolved without delay.

43. **Mr. Borda** (Colombia) said that, since the proclamation of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People in 1993, his Government had taken a number of steps to implement United Nations recommendations for the benefit of indigenous communities and peoples. It had participated actively in various activities under the Decade, including work on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the second workshop on the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people, held recently in Santiago, Chile.

44. In December 1996, the Governments of Colombia and Denmark had sponsored the International Meeting of Indigenous People and Other Forest Inhabitants on the Administration, Conservation and Sustainable Development of Forests of all types, held in Colombia. Some 100 delegates from indigenous communities in Latin America, Africa and the Asia and the Pacific region, together with representatives of non-governmental organizations, governmental experts and representatives of local indigenous communities, had participated in the Meeting in order to formulate proposals for action on issues of relevance to the peoples concerned and provide input to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

45. In cooperation with the Guambian indigenous community in Colombia, his Government had succeeded in eradicating the illicit poppy cultivation on Guambian land, which had given rise to crime and other social problems and caused serious environmental degradation. The decision taken by the Guambian people and their authorities to eradicate poppy cultivation had been enthusiastically supported by the National Alternative Development Plan, which had assisted the rebuilding of the Guambians' society, economy and culture by providing technical assistance, purchasing land for them and supporting agricultural programmes. That effort had led to a National Alternative Development Plan for Indigenous People, designed to complement illicit crop eradication on indigenous land by guaranteeing the integrity of such land, supporting traditional indigenous economies, strengthening their special jurisdiction and assisting them with infrastructure projects.

46. **Ms. Cornette** (Guyana) said that international cooperation to solve the problems faced by indigenous people with respect to development, health care, protection of their human rights and preservation of their culture was crucial, and she welcomed the work of the relevant United Nations agencies in those areas. There was a need to establish machinery for coordinating their activities with those of Governments, regional organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and associations of indigenous people. The provision of adequate resources was also important and it was therefore regrettable that the Trust Fund for the Decade had not received sufficient contributions to cover its needs. She urged all Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which had not already done so to give generously to the Fund. The Special Rapporteur who was studying the question of indigenous land rights must also be provided with the assistance which was needed in order to complete her final working paper.

47. Guyana was celebrating the International Decade as part of an ongoing process to protect the rights and promote the welfare of its own indigenous people. The principle of cooperation and consultation between the Government and Guyana's indigenous communities was well entrenched. Indigenous rights and such issues as social, economic and cultural development were addressed by the Ministry for Amerindian Affairs, established in 1992, which also ensured that Amerindian interests were taken fully into account in all Government policies, programmes and projects. A bill conferring land title upon Amerindians was currently before the legislature.

48. Her Government looked forward to the adoption of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and believed that its provisions on such matters as land rights, health care, education and language should serve as a blueprint for activities during the remainder of the Decade.

49. Education was of vital importance in addressing the problems faced by indigenous people. She therefore welcomed the granting of fellowships to applicants from a number of indigenous organizations to enable them to receive practical training at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and hoped that many more people would benefit from such programmes. She urged that serious consideration be given to the recommendation by the Commission on Human Rights that a workshop for research and higher education institutions focusing on indigenous issues and human rights should be held in the spring of 1998.

50. While there had been many encouraging developments since the start of the Decade, much remained to be done. She hoped that Governments, United Nations agencies and indigenous peoples would build upon their partnership in order to ensure the success of the Decade.

51. **Ms. Maldonado** (Bolivia) said that, as a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual country, Bolivia had participated actively in United Nations efforts on behalf of indigenous people. The Government had established a National Committee for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People in order to plan, implement and evaluate national activities in favour of indigenous people. In 1997, it had held a first Course on Indigenous Law and organized an International Seminar on the Administration of Justice and Indigenous People. Despite the major economic difficulties that it was experiencing, Bolivia had also pledged US$ 5 million to the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. Lastly, she appealed to the international financial institutions and the developed countries to increase their cooperation on behalf of indigenous peoples.

Agenda item 107: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (*continued*) (A/C.3/52/L.28 and L.29)

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.28: Follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States

52. **Mr. Kryskov** (Russian Federation), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.28 on behalf of the original sponsors, and Japan and Turkmenistan, said that the Regional Conference had been a unique forum for the analysis of migratory movements within the Commonwealth of Independent States and the development of measures aimed at resolving existing problems and preventing new flows of refugees and displaced persons. The draft resolution outlined the progress made over the past 18 months in implementing the decisions of the Regional Conference, and drew upon the conclusions of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at its forty-seventh session and upon the review of the work of the Steering Group established to monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference. It was imperative to build on the atmosphere of constructive cooperation which had characterized the follow-up to the Regional Conference thus far, and he therefore hoped that the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.29: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

53. **Ms. Mustonen** (Finland) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.29 on behalf of the Nordic countries and the original sponsors, who had been joined by Afghanistan, Albania, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Suriname, Turkmenistan and Uganda. The draft resolution drew on the language of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in previous years. It reiterated the fundamental principles of refugee protection and the importance of their implementation in a manner compatible with the purpose of international refugee instruments. The primary responsibility of States with regard to refugee protection was underlined, but there was also recognition of the need for international solidarity and burden-sharing. The draft resolution called for measures to ensure the security of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as humanitarian staff. There was special reference to the particular needs and rights of refugee women and children, and voluntary repatriation was identified as the preferred solution to refugee problems. Lastly, the draft resolution addressed the acute problem of funding for UNHCR. The sponsorship of the draft resolution by some 90 countries reflected global concern at the refugee problem and she hoped that, as in the past, it would be adopted by consensus.

Announcement concerning sponsorship of draft resolutions

54. **The Chairman** announced that Turkey should have been listed as one of the original sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.31, submitted under agenda item 110.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.